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Educating Boys, Graduating Men: Student masculinity at Centre College, 1865-1885

Amanda Renee Ledford
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Amanda Renee Ledford entitled "Educating Boys, Graduating Men: Student masculinity at Centre College, 1865-1885." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Stephen V. Ash, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Lorri Glover, Janis Appier

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Educating Boys, Graduating Men: Student Masculinity at Centre College, 1865-1885

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Amanda Renee Ledford

May 2007

To Steve Beaudoin for encouraging my love of history (even though I chose not to study the French Revolution), teaching me how to research, and for being friend as well as mentor.

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Abstract

During the nineteenth century higher education was an important part of the development of upper- and middle-class young men. College did not train young men for a career; rather it educated them in classical subjects and religion. Knowledge of Greek and Latin was considered a distinction of class, while religious training prepared young men for their anticipated role as the spiritual leader of their family. I focused my study of higher education and masculinity on Centre College, founded 1819. Using both school documents and personal papers of Centre students, I have developed a composite of Centre students, their parents, the administration and their attitudes towards manhood.

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Introduction

"All new boys would do well to heed Dr. Beatty's warning given in Chapel the other morning, to 'beware of the old students. Don't allow yourself to be enticed beyond the gas-lamps after night under any circumstances, or you may be sorry for it.' A word to the wise is sufficient."[1]

This excerpt from the Courant refers to President Ormond Beatty's welcoming speech in the fall of 1879. Centre College, located in Danville, Kentucky, was chartered in 1819, and is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the South. This remark published in the campus literary magazine reveals much about the relationship between older students and underclassmen and between the student body and school administrators. Within the boundaries of campus, students were protected. Administrators could control this environment and urged students to remain inside it. Underclassmen were susceptible to coercion by upperclassmen, whom they looked up to; yet the word of caution in the Courant implies that upperclassmen were also concerned about the welfare of their younger counterparts. In this thesis I will explore the intersecting relationships among students, parents, and school officials at Centre College from 1865 to 1885.

Centre College has sent out graduates without interruption since 1824. At the school's founding, Presbyterian leaders secured a dominant position on the board of trustees. They wished to set in place certain values and beliefs "in which the College would find its own substance and purpose for all the years to come." In the nineteenth

[1] Courant, Danville, KY, 1878-1880, Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library, Centre College, Danville, KY, 54.

century, many Centre graduates achieved prominence and the reputation of the college grew. In 1903 future president Woodrow Wilson stated, "There's a little college down in Kentucky which in 60 years graduated more men who have acquired prominence and fame than has Princeton in her 150 years."[2]

Centre College is the child of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky, and can trace its origin to matters far back in the history of that church and of the Commonwealth. The story begins with Transylvania Seminary, incorporated 1783. In 1785, the seminary opened near Danville, Kentucky, in the house of the Rev. David Rice, who also presided over the institution. In October 1788, the seminary was moved to Lexington, Kentucky, but was still "conducted under the auspices of the Presbyterian church."[3]

The seminary was chartered as a state, not denominational, institution and soon the head teacher was removed and replaced. This angered the Presbyterians of Kentucky, who protested the change, but to no avail. Finally they endeavored to establish their own school, which would be "a Public Seminary to be placed under the care of a President, who should be a learned and zealous minister of the gospel; but no endeavors should be used by him or other teachers to influence the mind of any student to change his religious tenets, further than is consistent with the general belief of the gospel system, and the practice of vital piety."[4]

The presbytery sent its petition to the legislature and on February 10, 1798, an institution named the Kentucky Academy was incorporated and endowed with 6,000

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[2] Richard L. Morrill, introduction to Centre College by William Strode (Louisville, 1985), 9-11.
[3] Courant, 27.
[4] Ibid.

acres of land. Now, two chartered schools existed in Kentucky; but both were weak and poor. Many "friends of learning" in the state felt that it would be better for both schools, "and for the cause of liberal education in the State," to merge the two institutions. A charter was issued for the new school, with a majority of the board of trustees being faithful Presbyterians. Soon, however, the denomination lost control of the board and thus the school.[5]

The Presbyterians, again, were displeased and immediately took steps to organize a new school. The new institution was chartered as Centre College of Kentucky. It was a state institution and the legislature reserved the right to "amend, alter, or repeal the charter at pleasure." The Presbyterians were not satisfied with this and continued their efforts to establish a denominational school. They applied to the legislature for a modification of the charter of Centre College, to give them exclusive control of it. The legislature consented to the modification of the charter, "provided the Presbyterian church would endow the college to the extent of $20,000." The act to amend the charter was adopted; the new charter provided that:

> So soon as $5, 000, part of the $20,000, are paid the Synod of Kentucky may at their next annual session, proceed to elect one-fourth of the Board, and the persons so elected shall be members in lieu of those members, in whose places they are elected, and whose seats in the Board shall have

[5] Ibid.

> been previously vacated by lot or otherwise. And so for the remaining three-fourths as the endowment fund was paid in. [6]

The last $5, 000 was paid and the synod received the exclusive right of electing trustees in 1830.

Centre College thus has strong Presbyterian roots, which are still evident at the institution today. Though the synod no longer presides over Centre, its influences have become ingrained in the everyday workings of the school. During the nineteenth century the synod still had firm control of Centre. Although the institution was not in the business of converting students, the presbytery provided a firm guiding hand to the young men in its custody. Using Biblical—specifically Presbyterian—principles, administrators and faculty molded young students into men. Centre students were schooled in Greek, Latin, philosophy and other classical subjects. Some students went on to become ministers after graduation and a few became doctors or lawyers; but many returned home to help their fathers with the family farm or to a farm of their own. While their classical learning was not necessarily essential to their future profession, it was a mark of gentleman standing.

In nineteenth century America, an elite youth culture developed. Male college students were preparing for manhood, but were not yet considered men. Young men attending college formed strong bonds with one another and helped each other become men. This youth culture gave rise to a set of rules that young men were expected to obey; if they chose to operate outside these rules, they were subject to reprimand by their peers. Contrary to the findings of some scholars who have examined nineteenth-century college

[6] Ibid., 28.

life, such as Robert Pace and Lorri Glover, Centre students did not develop a counter-culture that resisted authority and made its own rules. Rather, they functioned within the boundaries established by parents and school administrators, while still attempting to assert their independence. Youth culture allowed for slight deviations from proper behavior; students were not yet men and therefore not subject to the same strict conventions as their fathers, uncles, and grandfathers. Slight misbehavior was tolerated, but persistent misconduct or significant indiscretion was addressed on both the adult and peer levels.

We can gain a great deal of insight into what characteristics Southerners thought a "man" should possess by examining those traits Southerners hoped to impart to their sons. Manhood was seen as an end goal, the object of a pursuit that could fail, falter, or succeed. In order to assist their sons in this endeavor, and perhaps to ensure that they would be successful in the pursuit of manhood, Southern parents sent their sons to institutes of higher education for more formal and rigorous preparation for manhood—in addition to formal scholastic education. By sending their sons to these institutions of higher education, middle- and upper-class Southern parents hoped not only to develop their young minds but also to mold them into men. However, these young men were not given freedom in the absence of their parents. College boys were closely supervised; their personal life as well as their academic performance was scrutinized by school officials. Adults wanted to ensure that young minds developed according to their standards.

I have focused my study on Centre College for many reasons. One is availability of sources. Centre College Special Collections holds many college documents from this

time period. They are full of relevant information and to date have not been used in any type of scholarly research. Additionally, Centre students of the mid- to late-nineteenth century included many young men from prominent families as well as those who would become well-known; the personal papers of many such students have been preserved and are currently housed in archives and are available to the public. Using these sources, it is possible to construct a reasonably complete picture of Centre College and its students. Excellent sources aside, Centre is a small school, founded and perpetuated by middle- and upper-class, white, Southern, Christian--specifically Presbyterian--men. Their sons, and sons of those like them, attended the school (until 1920, only males attended Centre College). During the nineteenth century the student body of Centre College was very homogeneous, and therefore can be generalized about. I chose to limit my study to the years 1865 to 1885 due to the huge body of information housed at Centre. Broadening the study beyond that period would be an overwhelming research task.

Only recently has the history of education begun to include gender as an explicit category of analysis; however, previous historical examinations of education implicitly deal with gender. Molding students into good citizens was the primary intention of school administrators and parents early on. By examining the ideal of citizenship promoted by administrators and parents, one can discern gendered expectations for these young men.

Bernard Bailyn, one of the first notable scholars of higher education, intended to demonstrate the insufficiency of existing studies on the history of education. His study, Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study, is tentative in nature and makes no pretense of being a comprehensive study of the subject.

Bailyn's central point is that formal schooling assumed new cultural burdens because of drastic changes in the composition and character of the new-world family.[7]

Steven J. Novak added to the history of education with a well-researched study of unrest on college campuses beginning in the 1760s. In The Rights of Youth: American Colleges and Student Revolts, he associates student misbehavior with young men declaring their independence from the Founding Fathers and therefore separating themselves from this generation. By rebelling against collegiate authority, students were symbolically asserting their manhood and maturity.[8]

In his three-volume work on the history of higher education, American Education: The National Experience, Lawrence A. Cremin examines the development of and relationships among an assortment of educational institutions during the nineteenth century: the household, church, school, newspaper, museums, libraries, and fairs. He analyzes shifts in the influence of these institutions on the education and socialization of individuals.[9]

David W. Robson, in Educating Republicans: The College in the Era of the American Revolution, traces the transformation of colonial colleges into republican institutions, focusing on the politicization of education. Higher education not only became politicized but also became linked to specific politics.[10]

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[7] Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study (Chapel Hill, 1960).
[8] Steven J. Novak, The Rights of Youth: American Colleges and Student Revolt, 1798-1815 (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1977).
[9] Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876 (New York, 1980).
[10] David W. Robson, Educating Republicans: The College in the Era of the American Revolution, 1750-1800 (Westport, CT, and London, 1985).

Beginning in the 1970s new scholarship challenged many of the assumptions and stereotypes in previous works. Frustrated by the lack of a new synthesis despite thirty years of revisionist scholarship, Roger L. Geiger edited a collection of essays, The American College in the Nineteenth Century, to demonstrate the new interpretation he supports. Four themes are central to his interpretation: regional differences among colleges; the development of the university at the end of the century; and the transition from colleges to universities. Geiger moves beyond criticism of old interpretations to construct a new synthesis, offering themes that merit further study.[11]

In Halls of Honor: College Men in the Old South, Robert F. Pace presents an interesting picture of Southern honor, saying that this concept governed Old South society. Pace's picture of honor explains the discrepancy between prescribed behavior and behavior exhibited by young, Southern men. As long as men appeared to be honorable, their misbehavior could be overlooked. Students often wore masks when they participated in childish activities. During the day, students presented themselves as upright, mature gentlemen of the South. According to the honor code Southern gentlemen adhered to, they must not be seen participating in any immature activity; yet it was acceptable as long as it went undetected.[12]

Bertram Wyatt-Brown states that there were two types of honor in the Old South: an ancient folk concept of "primal honor," and "gentility" shaped by aristocratic, religious, and intellectual influences. He contends that the concept of primal honor was the principal type of honor, taking precedence over gentility. The opposite seems true, he

[11] Roger L. Geiger, ed., The American College in the Nineteenth Century (Nashville, 2000).
[12] Robert F. Pace, Halls of Honor: College Men in the Old South (Baton Rouge, 2004).

notes, only because the genteel, Christian upbringing of scholars themselves has led them to emphasize gentility. While he admits that gentility and Christianity were gaining prominence, he regards their influence on society as quite limited. Wyatt-Brown demonstrates how courage, loyalty, and manly risk-taking were more than personal ideals. A man's sense of honor touched his community as well, tying him to other men by attaching a unique moral meaning to kinship, gender, and male language. The ethic of honor cut across class lines to shape an ideology that allowed men to justify their dominance and regulate their competition. Honor reinforced the idea of male control; the concept permeated family and gender relations. [13]

Wyatt-Brown, concludes Southern Honor by saying that "defense of male integrity" was fundamental to Southern culture. Society was patriarchal in its appearance and its fundamental nature; male heads of household held firm control of their dependents. The family was the primary economic and social unit. Men were brought up in a way that instilled masculine valor. They were in training to someday head a household of their own. Their upbringing and education as young men was all for the end goal of having a family and living independently from their fathers.[14]

In the most recent scholarly work on the subject of manhood and education, Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation, Lorri Glover takes a stance similar to Pace's, but takes it one step further: honor was important to Southern men, she says, but independence was equally important, if not more so. These men developed their own values. While parents and administrators had well-defined ideas about what kind of men

[13] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South (New York, 1982), 146.
[14] Ibid., 34.

their sons were, and should become, the actual behavior of these college men did not always demonstrate the same values of manhood. The behaviors that adults found offensive, such as arrogance, debauchery, and violence, gratified young men and became recast as pride, independence, and the exercise of manly power.[15]

In this thesis, I will demonstrate how these ideas fit with the experience of nineteenth-century Centre College youth. My study will confirm some findings of previous scholars, but they will also challenge some of these findings. The young men I have studied, and their parents, demonstrate a different vision of masculinity than that presented by Bertram Wyatt-Brown. Likewise, Centre students' behavior diverged from that explicated by Lorri Glover. Young men at Centre fell in line with adults' values and ideals, unlike the young men in Glover's study, who established their own ideals and placed their own values on behavior. It is not evident whether Centre students were the rule or the exception; more research is needed to determine exactly what my findings mean for this field of study. However, my findings add to the growing body of work on masculinity and higher education, highlighting the need for further research.

While a classical education may have been an outdated notion no longer useful, certain things were regarded as a necessary part of Southern manhood in the nineteenth century, regardless of whether these notions still had a function. Much like petticoats for young ladies, certain ideas were deemed proper simply because they always had been. Nineteenth-century Southern men had their own definition of manhood, which was different from masculine ideals in other regions.

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[15] Lorri Glover, Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation (Baltimore, 2007).

Along with parental instruction, higher education helped turn boys into men. Parents closely participated in their sons' education, working alongside school administrators and faculty members to mold their sons into respectable, educated men. Religious instruction was also a very important part of this transformation because Christian devotion was considered an essential quality in a man. As they molded young Centre students into men the Presbyterians of Centre reminded them that the Bible teaches that a man is supposed to head his household and offer spiritual guidance for his family and Christian leadership for his community. So, in learning to be a good Christian, the Centre student also learned to be a good husband, father, and community leader—in short, a good man. For many families, religion was the linchpin in their family structure. Men of this status were the head of their household—the religious leader of the family.

Religion and Manhood

Religious devotion was important to women, but they were not expected to be leaders of the faith. Women may have been held to a higher standard of propriety than men, but men were responsible for the behavior of their entire household and therefore were charged with much greater responsibility. For these reasons, religious education was especially important to these college boys who would someday grow into men. After graduation, they would secure jobs, marry, and have families. In order to properly lead their families in regard to the church and to be responsible for their spiritual well-being these young men would need a solid religious foundation and substantial spiritual knowledge.

Centre College was founded primarily as an institution to train future members of the clergy. Later, this purpose expanded: Centre wished to educate men who would be productive and respected, who would become leaders of their communities after graduation. In addition to educating students in the classics, and later mathematics and science, Centre College naturally emphasized religious education. Centre had such a commitment to spiritual instruction and training ministers that "young men of limited means, preparing to preach the Gospel—when suitably recommended, [paid] no tuition fee. The sons of Presbyterian Ministers (and later sons of ministers of any denomination), also, [were] admitted to all privileges of the College without charge." Contrary to Wyatt-Brown's notion of honor in the South, Christianity and intellect were important tenets of the ideas of honor and manhood espoused by Centre students and their parents. Training young men to be well-educated, moral, Christian men was the aim of the college and the parents who sent their sons there to be educated. [16]

The faculty and administration of the college felt duty-bound to inculcate students with proper moral and religious behavior. In addition to imparting religious knowledge, Centre, as an institution, felt compelled to encourage students' participation in religious activities. The minutes of Centre's Board of trustees in 1878 state that "During the year the religious students, under the supervision of the Faculty, [were] organized into a Young Men's Christian Association." In the same year, the faculty and the Board of trustees made a joint effort to "discover the best method of giving religious instruction to the students. In addition to the Chapel worship, with which the duties of each day are

[16] Centre College Handbook, 1865, 1870, Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library.

begun, the students are expected to attend the 2nd Presbyterian Church at least once every Sabbath . . . Bible classes . . . are taught regularly by the Professors in the 2nd Presbyterian Church and the students are expected to attend." The Board further stated that it "assigned the religious instruction of the students especially to the Vice President. . . . It is arranged for the Vice President to have all the students one half hour each morning . . . instruction will be given in the Old Testament . . . [and] the New Testament. . . . This exercise is considered a regular study with examinations and marks." By requiring prayer meeting participation and Chapel attendance, Centre conveyed to its students the importance of religious devotion and prayer.[17]

Centre went one step further than merely teaching its students religion and encouraging religious conviction: the institution ensured that Centre students resided in a Christian atmosphere. Rather than being responsible only for its students' academic development in the campus setting, Centre took responsibility for all aspects of its students' lives. In the early years of the college, all Centre students boarded in town at private residences, for the administration felt strongly that students were best looked after by boarding with upright families. The Centre College catalogue for 1865 stated, "the students do not board and lodge together, but in private families; in which they enjoy the advantages of Christian society, and are thus [protected] from many temptations." Students lodging together unsupervised created an atmosphere that encouraged camaraderie and boyish mischief. By housing the students separately, in stable, Christian homes, Centre decreased the likelihood of behavior problems and extended the religious

[17] Centre College Trustees Minutes, Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library.

education of students outside the physical confines of the college. The families who provided lodging for Centre students acted in loco parentis, monitoring students' behavior outside of school, thus reinforcing religious training. [18]

Eventually Centre was forced to amend its student housing policy. In 1863, an existing building was converted into rooms to house students due to the difficulty of finding proper boarding for students at reasonable rates. In 1875, Centre expanded its student housing to include the College Home. This building could accommodate forty students; it included a kitchen and dining room and employed a matron to furnish meals and supervise the residents. The 1875 minutes of the Centre board of trustees show that the board discussed the proper person to fill this role: "The lady solicited for this post is Mrs. Gilbert, a Christian lady of high character who came to Danville from St. Charles, Missouri, and who is personally well known to some members of the board of trustees."[19]

This matron, a mother-like figure, was responsible for the care of all students in the College Home. In 1875, the Centre board of trustees determined that "the matron of the College Home shall conduct it under the general superintendence of the Faculty of the College who shall, in subordination to the Charter and College laws make such regulations for the government of the Home and of the students who live in it, as their judgment may approve." She was directly responsible to the board of trustees; this body thus indirectly retained control over Centre students' lives, even outside the classroom. [20]

[18] Centre College Handbook, 1865.
[19] Centre College Trustees Minutes, 1875.
[20] Ibid.

Parents and Administration Working in Concert

College students were not treated as adults. Parents, faculty, and the college administration did everything possible to supervise their charges. College was intended to be a time of growth and change for students. Parents sent boys to college with the hope that they would leave their childhood behind and return as men, and they wanted assurance that their sons' childish behavior did not get out of control while away from home. Sending sons away from home to be educated gave them only the illusion of independence. While college gave young men distance from their families, and home communities, in reality students were still closely supervised by their parents, via school officials and other adults. This appearance of freedom was very important, however. Under the pretense of freedom, young men learned the skills they needed to someday have a family of their own and developed into truly independent men.

Even after Centre students began living on campus with other students, rather than in town under the supervision of Christian families, many had a local guardian who acted on behalf of absent parents. Before sending their sons away to get an education, many fathers would entrust a family member or friend in the area to look after his son while he was in college—to advise in financial matters and to help with the guidance and discipline of the young man. When a relative or friend was not available to fill this role, a father would endeavor to find someone else suitable to fill the role of guardian. These guardians reinforced the teachings of parents and school administrators and ensured that

young men got the most out of their college experience and did not waste their father's money in the process.[21]

Young men in college were still under the control of their parents and looked to them for guidance in all matters. Further, Centre students were still very much financially dependent on their parents for tuition and other necessities and whatever luxuries they might desire. These students sent letters home that included a list of requests they hoped their parents would fill. They were not reserved about their wishes; rather they were very straightforward. These letters often demonstrated a sense of entitlement on the part of the students. For example, on October 5, 1868, Lewis Collins wrote to his mother from the Forest Home (his residential home at Centre) saying, "I hope Father's pecuniary affairs are improving so that he will feel disposed and better able to supply my many wants." Parents were expected to keep their sons not only in good financial standing with the college but also comfortable and fashionable.[22]

While an expensive and troublesome process, a young man's transition into manhood was as important for his parents as it was for the young man himself. Parents worked in concert with school officials to ensure that their sons benefited from their time in college. While parents were still in command of their sons' lives, school administrators acted in the parental capacity for students studying away from home, monitoring their behavior and progress.

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[21] Glover, 74-74.
[22] Lewis Collins to his mother, 5 October 1868, Collins Family Papers, Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

Even those infractions taking place outside of school hours or off of school property were open to scrutiny—and punishment—by school officials. College administrators held authority over students on and off of school grounds. On October 3, 1870, a special meeting of the faculty convened to manage disciplinary problems. Landram and Alex McKee appeared: "they were again warned to mend their conduct and never to go to any circus without permission from the Faculty." It is not clear whether the circus itself or the fact that the two boys left campus without permission from the faculty was the matter of concern. This instance demonstrates the degree of involvement of the Centre faculty in its students' lives. Student behavior off campus that had no direct effect on a student's academic life was still open to examination by the college administration.[23]

The faculty had the authority to both discipline any misbehaving student and to inform his parents of his offense. The faculty and parents worked with one another to educate and prepare these young men for adulthood. At the same meeting mentioned in the previous paragraph, "Mr. William McKee was also summoned in order to hear the sentence of his final dismission from the College. Professor Beatty, after reviewing the many and repeated offences of the young, hardened delinquent, which made it obligatory upon him to announce to the young gentleman that all his connection with the College was for now dissolved. He very kindly and very affectionately, for the sake of his father, advised him to change completely his conduct as it would otherwise bring sorrow to his parents, and troubles and more to him." President Beatty knew the importance that respectable parents placed on the proper rearing and education of their sons. If dismissed

[23] Centre College Faculty Meeting Minutes, 3 October 1870, Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library.

from college, William McKee missed an important step in his progression to adulthood. If he did not leave Centre under respectable circumstances, he would be marked as a failure, and therefore a dishonor to his father. Moreover, McKee would continue to be a financial burden on his father, rather than beginning a life of his own.[24]

A student's parents were generally consulted when he required punishment. Many times the administration would defer to the family to dispense punishment. When a student's behavior warranted expulsion, the faculty usually requested that the parents withdraw their son from the college. This kept the locus of control within the family. Also, it saved the family the embarrassment of having their son expelled from college. The school acted on behalf of the family—specifically the father. Additionally, college administrators understood how college was a social distinction as much as it was an opportunity for education. At the October 27, 1876, meeting, it was recorded that, "on account of Crittenden's repeated absences, disorderly conduct, violation of the solemn obligations assumed by him on his reinstatement in his class, and for his bad influence upon other students, it was resolved by a unanimous vote that he should not recite again with his class; and the President was furthermore directed to write to [Crittenden's] father and make a preemptive request of him to withdraw his son from College immediately." At the same meeting, "by unanimous vote the President was likewise directed to say to Dr. Ayers that unless his son radically changes his course, the faculty would be compelled to dismiss him from college." The faculty and board of trustees dealt with minor infractions, but parents were always kept abreast of their sons' behavior and were

[24] Ibid.

responsible for dealing with major breaches of proper behavior. Often students were sent home after misbehaving and were not allowed to return until their parents verified that they had been appropriately disciplined. [25]

Even when their son was not misbehaving, parents were kept abreast of his academic progression at Centre; report cards were regularly sent home. These progress reports began with a message from the school's president:

> Dear Sir: The object of this circular is convey to the Parent or Guardian of each pupil connected with Centre College, some information as to the character of his son or ward, in regard to his deportment and scholarship.
>
> In determining the Student's standing as a scholar, his diligence in study, is, of course, regarded as an element, as well as the character of his daily recitations.
>
> The mark for deportment is not intended to designate the general moral character of the Student, as with this the Faculty cannot always be accurately acquainted; but it exhibits his character for regularity and punctuality in the discharge of his duties, and propriety and orderliness in his conduct as a Student. Any breaches of general morality, when known to us, would form the subject of a special communication to the parent.[26]

[25] Ibid., 27 October 1876.
[26] Report card, 1864, Pope-Humphrey Family Papers, Correspondence, 1863-1865, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, KY.

Parents were closely involved in their sons' everyday lives even when they were away from home. Sons wrote to their parents to ask counsel on matters of religion, education, and friendship. They seemed to respect the advice they were given and as a rule followed the suggestions given by parents (most often fathers). However, fathers and sons had an awkward relationship. Sons strove to please their fathers, but at the same time feared them. Fathers felt responsible for their sons and hoped they would grow into respectable gentlemen, but also seemed to view their sons as a moral and financial burden. According to Wyatt-Brown, the upbringing of young men in this time period fostered father-son tensions. This is observable in the letters of Lewis Collins in the late 1860s. He was anxious for his father's advice and approval, yet he was hesitant to directly solicit his father for either. He seemed to be more comfortable writing to his mother, requesting that she solicit her husband on his behalf. Lewis Collins wished to return home to help his father in his office and to visit with family and friends he had missed while he was at school; yet he would not return until his father had written and requested that he return home. Perhaps Collins was aware of the importance of college to his development; leaving would surely anger his father, who hoped his son would become a respectable gentleman, and thus justify the burden on his family.

In another letter, Collins wrote:

My dear Mother,

As I have written to Father and received an answer, I do not want to trouble him to answer another, so I write to you. I will go to Mr.

> McCown this evening and ask him how I shall prepare to join the church and, if prepared, I will join before Christmas.
>
> Tell Father I feel highly complimented by his remarks on my letter, and I will write again so that he can note the improvement.[27]

Parental and administrative authority alike warranted deference from young men. Centre students were respectful of authority due to their religious upbringing. Additionally, students knew they needed the financial assistance and advice of their parents to succeed in college. If students misbehaved too badly, they would be sent home from school, with little hope of a respectable future or would be no longer supported by their father, or both. Students were acutely aware of how little autonomy they actually possessed. Lewis Collins understood his precarious position, which seemed to make him feel obligated to his father, as if he needed to prove himself and his manhood. On October 23, 1868, he wrote to his mother saying, "I know it takes a great deal to keep me at school, but I will apply my-self to learning and will not be supported by Father much longer, but will make my own living and try to help him some as by that time I hope Sisters will be married." Collins felt indebted to his father, as if he suspected that he was a financial burden on him. On November 7 of the same year, Collins wrote to his father: "In this, my first letter to you, I must express my thanks to you for your pains in striving to please and educate one so unworthy of your pains as I, in times past, have been; but for the future I will strive to please you in return." This letter indicates that Collins felt

[27] Lewis Collins to his mother, 1 June, 15 November 1868, Collins Family Papers.

obliged to become successful after graduation in order to repay his father for supporting and sustaining him during his college years. [28]

This obligation made a young man feel duty-bound to defer to his parents (especially his father). However, rather than following rules out of fear or respect, Centre boys embraced the ideals of their parents' generation—religious devotion, classical education, and masculine honor. Students largely valued the same principles as the administration and their parents: they agreed that education, respectable behavior, proper dress, and respect for the opposite sex were important.

Centre students did have their boyish fun, yet they rarely did anything that would insult or upset their parents, or cause them a great deal of trouble with the school. Each year from 1865 until 1885, in their annual report to the board of trustees, the faculty stated that "No flagrant breaches of discipline have occurred, and only a few cases requiring more than an admonition or reprimand." The most common reason for students to be called to a faculty meeting for reprimand was the use of "impertinent and insulting language," particularly in the classroom. Other reasons included being under the influence of alcohol—on or off school grounds—rowdy behavior in town, and not attending classes regularly.[29]

It seems that alcohol became a problem at Centre in the years following the Civil War. At the October 8, 1875, faculty meeting it was ordered that the "ancient but uniform rule which dismisses any student for drinking be revived and enforced." This would

[28] Lewis Collins to his mother, 23 October 1868, Lewis Collins to his father, 7 November 1868, Collins Family Papers.
[29] Centre College Trustees Minutes, 1865-1885.

indicate that drinking had become a recurrent problem among students. The resurrection of a harsher punishment for the transgression seemed to make the school's stance on the subject clear and must have deterred students: the problem of drinking disappears from the faculty minutes after this date.[30]

This incident also shows the importance of school and family approval to Centre students. During the late nineteenth century, a college education was not necessary for a sustainable livelihood. Young men recognized that college was a mark of class and a rite of passage—a necessary part of the journey to manhood. Expulsion from college would have embarrassed to a student's parents, which was unmanly. Also the student would be skipping a necessary step in his passage to manhood.[31]

Adulthood was a foreign concept on the horizon of Centre students' lives. The students seemed to feel that until graduation they were exempt from the rules and responsibilities of manhood. They were not men but "men-in-training" and therefore did not have the responsibilities that their fathers, grandfathers, and uncles did. College was a refuge from real life—a "grace period" after childhood, before adulthood began. Students seemed to be both aware of and grateful for their transitional position in life. In 1867, E. E. McKay wrote to his friend Benjamin Bell in the latter's autograph book: "College days are said to be the brightest—College associations the happiest—and college friends the truest that ever bless the troubled course of man. . . . We must soon part—Manly Life

[30] Centre College Faculty Meeting Minutes, 8 October 1875.
[31] Centre College Trustees Minutes, 1865-1885; Centre College Faculty Meeting Minutes, 14 April 1871.

calls us to a more earnest arena." Students were aware that life after college would be drastically different from their carefree days as a student. [32]

In American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era, Anthony Rotundo argues that a "boy culture" or "youth culture" developed among young men of the Northern middle class in the late nineteenth century; this was a distinctive world created by young men that both affirmed and challenged the world of adult males. Boy culture was separate from the world of women and that of men. It was here that young males learned valuable lessons that prepared them for adulthood. I think his ideas can also be applied to young men of the Southern middle class. This concept reconciles Centre students' minor misbehavior with their Christian commitment and respect for authority. These young men were very aware that they were not yet independent and self-sufficient men; they were financially dependent on their fathers and still subject to their fathers' will.[33]

While generally respectful of authority, Centre students nonetheless had their boyish misadventures. This mischief was either ignored or dealt with lightly by parents and administrators, but was also kept to a minimum due to peer regulation. Centre students generally behaved themselves both out of respect for their parents and other authority figures, and out of pride in themselves. College students behaved mischievously, but they generally did not resist parental or academic intervention in their lives. More than anything, these young men wanted to receive proper training to grow

[32] Benjamin Bell autograph book, 1867, Bell Family Papers, Filson Historical Society.
[33] Anthony E. Rutundo, American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era (New York, 1993).

into respectable men. Participation in youth culture was important, but not more so than the end goal of manhood. Also, appearance was an important part of masculinity; Centre students wanted to present themselves to the outside world as reputable, genteel young men.

During a young man's development from boy to man, he was still dependent on his family, but this transition period was important because young men began separating themselves from their families and moving toward independence. Forming strong bonds with other young men was a necessary step in breaking from the influence of their families—particularly their fathers. This disconnection was a key step on the journey to manhood. Young men could not progress and become independent without severing the attachment to their family. While college was a time of strict supervision for students, this time away from home was vital to young men's progress in life. Students and parents were both aware of the importance of this separation.

While some aspects of masculinity were strictly monitored by parents and faculty, with peer networks merely reinforcing their ideas, other aspects were almost entirely left to the young man's peers to reinforce. Proper appearance and fashionable clothing were learned by observing other young men. Masculinity was not a façade, but appearance was an important element of the model. Looking like a gentleman was every bit as important as behaving like a gentleman. Just as Centre students wanted to develop into respectable, proper men they desired a respectable, proper appearance. It was especially essential to be well-dressed and well-groomed at church. Lewis Collins wrote to his mother: "Both my hats are so shabby that I am ashamed to wear them on Sunday but maybe I can

borrow one on Sunday until you send me one; I think the two I have will last me for common wear till next May." In another letter to his mother, he wrote, "I wish Grand Pa could see how rapidly my mustache and whiskers grow, so that he would send me a set of shaving apparatus and I have to shave every other week and there is but one good razor in school and the owner does not like to lend it, and I think he is right. Upon looking, I find that one pair of my shoes are entirely gone, so that I can not wait longer than the 23rd of this Month."[34]

Appearance was important to show pride in oneself and to exhibit respect in religious settings, but a decent appearance was also important to impressing the fair sex. Male-female relations were a subject that roused much interest in Centre students. These young men seemed to approach romantic relations cautiously. Centre students seemed to regard young ladies as creatures that should be treated properly and admired, but not necessarily as objects of desire. These young men were interested in young women and recognized the need to form romantic attachments later in life; they would need to take a wife to become a proper gentleman and to start a family. Yet, they kept their distance, placing more emphasis on education, pleasing their parents, and cultivating strong friendships with other male students.

Perhaps less importance was placed on interactions with women because so much emphasis was placed on intra-gender relations. Strong, almost romantic, friendships with other young men eased the transition into manhood. Young men shared dreams and experiences and could connect on a much deeper level than was possible with young

[34] Lewis Collins to his mother, 30 October 1868, Collins Family Papers.

ladies. Young men at Centre understood the importance of treating women properly and saw them as delicate, fragile creatures that should be regarded as such. They had little need for romantic attachments because they received all the friendship and support they needed from members of their own sex. Further, women were not seen as equals of men. Even marriages followed this pattern—they were not equal partnerships. Men supported their wife and in return the wife took care of the household—cooking, cleaning, taking care of children and entertaining guests. Nonetheless, romantic attachments were often subject to discussion among young men. In the case of Centre students, they seemed more interested in musing about male-female relations than actually pursuing them.

Peer Networks

Close male friendships led to the development of strong peer groups. Even though they were closely supervised by adults, Centre students formed social networks and hierarchies among themselves. Within these they kept watch over the behavior of their peers. Fraternities and class groups were tightly knit organizations that monitored the development and behavior of their members. Upperclassmen enforced social norms through example and intimidation. Through student organizations and publications they ensured that no one strayed too far from the ideal of manhood. Religious activities, academic performance, extracurricular activity, and courtship were observed and analyzed through these venues. The value system and ideal of manhood in place among students very closely correlated with that of parents and administrators. Rather than foster a counterculture, these student social controls mostly served to reinforce the standards set by adults.

In addition to formal social organizations, young men formed intimate, individual friendships with other young men. Some of these friendships flourished within the confines of social organizations, such as fraternities or literary societies, but often developed outside these formal associations. Benjamin Bell's 1857 autograph book reveals that he shared this almost romantic attachment with many of his friends:

> Dear Ben,
>
> I shall ever think of the moments I have passed with you, with sweet but sad remembrance. Sweet because they were spent in communion with a friend whose society is dear to me. Sad because they were so brief and so often interrupted by absence. But, Ben, let us hope that Fortune has yet in store for us many delightful hours of pleasant intercourse. May God grant it be so. I shall ever esteem your friendship the specialest treasure I can have on this earth. When separated from you by night my prayers [will] still be for your well fare. But words are vain, they refuse to express the affection I feel for you. But ever be assured you can depend on me as a True Friend.
>
> J.D. Green[35]

The inscription above is not an anomaly in Mr. Bell's autograph book; there were many entries expressing similar sentiments. Bill L. Dulaney of Bowling Green wrote: "There are few albums upon whose pages it gives me more pleasure to leave my name than upon this. You have been my friend and my classmate for a long while and have

[35] Benjamin Bell autograph book.

sustained another relation which cannot be mentioned in so humble a place as this." It is tempting to conjecture as to exactly what Dulaney was referring to by "another relation which cannot be mentioned." He could have been referring to a spiritual, emotional, brotherly attachment; or perhaps he was referring to a more homoerotic attachment, such as those described by Anthony Rotundo. It is impossible to be sure.[36]

Likewise, E.E. McKay of Bloomfield, Kentucky, signed his inscription "Farewell—Remember me ever." Such tender sentiments between young men were common; they took the bonds of friendship very seriously, giving it a passionate quality. Centre students did not see women as potential partners who could assist them in their moral and spiritual development; rather they turned to other young men to fill this role. While eventually these young men would take a wife, during their college days they were still growing and developing into men and needed the camaraderie and intimacy of other young men.[37]

In addition to promoting love and friendship among young men, fraternities were one way Centre men monitored one another's behavior. Fraternities formally connected young men and as brothers they had a greater stake in encouraging proper behavior among their peers. Also, if a brother misbehaved, the fraternity offered a system through which he could be reprimanded or corrected. In the mid- to late-nineteenth century Centre was home to four fraternities: Phi Delta Theta, founded 1850; Sigma Alpha Epsilon, founded 1882; Sigma Chi, founded 1876; Beta Theta Pi, founded 1848; and Alpha Kappa Phi, founded 1859. Nearly all important records of these fraternities are now held by the

[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

fraternities themselves, and are not available to the public. However, due to its demise in the late nineteenth century, the complete records of Alpha Kappa Phi are held by Centre College Special Collections. These are invaluable in documenting Centre students' ideals of manhood and their implementation.

Alpha Kappa Phi was founded to encourage brotherly bonds and masculine pride. Its constitution says: "It is the desired end of this organization, to cultivate this refined feeling [love], to strengthen the bonds of fraternal intercourse, to create intimacy and friendships, in young hearts, which purify the moral affections and recuperate the moral being casting aside the ostentation of a formal world."[38]

Fraternity members were much more than friends or drinking buddies. Alpha Kappa Phi took the notion of brotherhood very seriously; its members considered themselves family and felt responsibility for each other's development and well-being. The fraternity spoke openly of affection among its members in a way that would make most modern-day fraternity men uncomfortable. Anthony Rotundo examines this phenomenon among Northern, middle-class men, stating that the youth culture of the mid-nineteenth century was a way station to manhood, where young men could come together for mutual support. He suggests that the intensity and near romantic quality of young men's friendships was part of their life cycle, and diminished as young men moved into manhood. I argue that the same experience can be observed among young Southern men. The students of Centre demonstrate these strong bonds of male attachment and affection. Alpha Kappa Phi codified them in its constitution. Strong bonds were

[38] Brothers of Alpha Kappa Phi, Constitution.

forged between members and love among these young men was an objective of the fraternity. Clause Eight of the fraternity's constitution reads:

Let each member of this fraternity cultivate a friendly affection for his brother members and remember that we are bound together by the warmest ties of love in one common cause. Let each member also commensurate with his ability endeavor to effect a reconciliation whenever his congeniality of feeling is destroyed or disturbed by dissension. Let the principle of "Love Purity Fidelity"—the beautiful "three in one"—be the monitor of each member of this fraternity. "Love"—which is an offspring of heavenly goodness and which teaches man to adore his God and act with a sympathizing heart toward his brother. "Purity"—which amends the moral affections and prompts us to be constant with honor and justice in our deeds. "Fidelity" which urges us to prove him to our professions and obligations under all reasonable circumstances consideration.[39]

Much more than a social club, Alpha Kappa Phi was a very religious organization. Its constitution was not only full of references to God; the entire fraternity was founded on the idea of love as demonstrated by God and his Son. Love, purity and fidelity were the foundation of Alpha Kappa Phi. The constitution of the organization ends by saying, "we stand a united band of brethren on earth to be reunited . . . at the throne of Eternity's King." To these young men, the ideal relationship between young men was based on that of God and His Son; it emphasized love and self-sacrifice.[40]

[39] Brothers of Alpha Kappa Phi, Constitution of Alpha Kappa Phi, 1858, Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library; Rotundo, American Manhood.
[40] Ibid.

Further, these young men understood the value of a proper education; they used their organization to enrich their minds. Encouraging members to become better men, and helping them in this pursuit, was the foremost goal of the fraternity. Friendship was second to this goal because members should first develop into men worthy of the love and friendship offered by their fraternity brothers. In order to promote the academic development of its brothers, the fraternity was divided into three classes of members—the composing class, the debating class, and the reading class. The composing class was assigned to compose essays and poetry, which were then read at meetings and discussed by the rest of the fraternity. The debating class debated a previously chosen topic at each meeting; those not participating in the debate observed, learning from the debate. The reading class was responsible for keeping the rest of the fraternity abreast of current literature and poetry, sharing new works and reading excerpts at meetings.

The principles promoted by Alpha Kappa Phi were shared by Centre College. Rather than rebelling against the standards set by parents and administrators, the young men of Alpha Kappa Phi were of the same mind as the adults in their lives; they embraced adult standards as their own and sought to reinforce them within their peer group. When any member strayed, the organization would reprimand this member. For example, Centre College disapproved of intoxication; young men were frequently called to faculty meetings to be reprimanded if it was discovered that they had been under the influence of alcohol. Likewise, Alpha Kappa Phi would not tolerate drinking within its bonds. Its constitution specifically addresses this problem, stating how the incident should be dealt with: “Habits of intoxication shall under all circumstances exclude a

candidate from membership in The Order. If at any time it shall come to the knowledge of the Moderator that any of the members have become intemperate it shall become his duty in the members' absence to inform the chapter and . . . appoint a committee of two who shall [meet with him]."[41]

The charter provided further instructions for how to discipline a repeat offender. "If the offense is repeated a second time it [the committee meeting] shall be [performed] again, a third time he shall be suspended from two meetings, if a fourth time he shall be at once expelled. If the Moderator shall shrink from the performance of this duty he ought at once to resign and give place to some one who will vindicate our laws and thus show the world that this Order will not permit the habits of intoxication in the bonds."[42]

When members displayed less than gentlemanly behavior, their brothers were quick to inform them that their behavior needed adjustment. At the October 17, 1865, meeting of Alpha Kappa Phi, the moderator felt "in duty bound to remind [his] brothers that by their lack of decorum they detract greatly from the dignity of the order." Members of Alpha Kappa Phi hoped that their organization would be respected and its members be regarded as upright, well-educated, Christian men.[43]

It appears that other fraternities operated similarly and held similar values. Beta Theta Pi thrived at the college until 2006. Like Alpha Kappa Phi, Beta Theta Pi was concerned with the development of its members and their growth into men. The design of the Beta shield signifies "manliness." We can assume that by "manliness" the fraternity

[41] Brothers of Alpha Kappa Phi, Constitution.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Alpha Kappa Phi, meeting minutes, 17 October, 1865, Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library.

referred to the concept and everything it encompassed, such as Christian values, proper dress, respectable behavior, etc. Similarly, Phi Delta Theta was concerned with "first, the cultivation of friendship among its members; second the acquirement individually of a high degree of mental culture; third the attainment personally of a high standard of morality." Both fraternities upheld the same ideals; Beta Theta Pi explicitly referred to the concept as "manliness," while Phi Delta Theta couched its objectives in different terms.[44]

The faculty and administration of Centre seemed to accept student organizations. A 1948 history of Beta Theta Pi declares: "From the outset, and throughout its history, Epsilon of Beta Theta Pi was accepted by the faculty and operated free of stringent regulations." There were no serious behavior problems; the informal student self-government did not impede faculty regulation. If anything, it reinforced it. These student organizations did not create problems within the school. More accurately, they supported the ideals promoted by the college itself. Rather than creating a counter-culture at odds with the mainstream culture of the college, Alpha Kappa Phi, Beta Theta Pi, and Phi Delta Theta hoped to be compatible with this culture. Their members desired the respect and acceptance of their parents and the College. [45]

In addition to peer group regulation, Centre students learned by example. Seniors used their experience and rank to educate younger students in proper behavior. Older students also used a bit of intimidation to enforce social norms. There was a definite

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[44] William Ellis Feldhaus, Epsilon Chapter of Beta Theta Pi: One Hundred Years at Centre, 1848-1948 (n.p., 1948), Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library; Gayle Watkins Threlkeld, The First Hundred Years of Kentucky Alpha-Delta of Phi Delta Theta (n.p., 1948), Special Collections, Grace Dougherty Library.
[45] Feldhaus, Epsilon Chapter of Beta Theta Pi.

hierarchy among young men at Centre. As older, more experienced members of the college, seniors were looked up to by the younger classes. Seniors seemed to embrace the distinction and felt they had earned their status, while underclassmen sincerely looked up to these older boys. Seniors did not take offense at underclassmen looking up to them as role models. They were quite willing to assist their younger peers in matters of academics, religion, and the heart. Yet, the seniors felt they had earned some sort of distinction and should be respected by underclassmen. They were aware of the hierarchy in place among Centre students and endeavored to keep it in place, making younger students very aware of its existence. Each class had customs and expected behaviors that it followed. Undoubtedly these customs were enforced by older students.

Student Publications

Another way Centre students scrutinized one another's behavior was through student publications. The Centre College Courant was published from 1879 till 1880. Officially it was a literary magazine, but a substantial portion of it was dedicated to the "Classroom and Campus" column, which commented on student relationships and behavior. This magazine, written and printed entirely by students, publicly scrutinized the behavior of fellow students, thus reinforcing the adult ideals they espoused. The Courant was a mirror for Centre's student body, reflecting student behavior and demonstrating the standards valued by students. The rules and boundaries set by students themselves served to emphasize those set by adults and society. The fact that young men enforced certain behavior through their own system indicates that they held these beliefs in high regard--

adopting them as their own--rather than simply taking on the beliefs of their parents out of respect or fear.

In the "Classroom and Campus" section of the Courant, everyone was open to scrutiny. Sports, education, and romance were all subjects to be commented on. Couched in the form of lighthearted jest, these comments had more serious undertones. Publicly poking fun at fellow students discouraged them from repeating their misbehavior. Making an example of the violator likewise discouraged other students from following the offender's lead.

The Courant even emphasized the student hierarchy that developed at Centre; upperclassmen made certain that younger students knew their place within the student body. For example, in an account reprinted in the Courant from a sophomore's memorandum book, he states: "The unalterable decree has commanded that Sophs. should always stand on the front door steps until a few minutes after the second bell has rounded. It is needless to say that this requirement is always (as it was to-day) obeyed to the very letter." In another issue, upperclassmen writers printed their thoughts, warning that "Freshmen shouldn't always do as their lords and masters, the Seniors. A red or yellow neck-tie, a knobby hat, or anything in that line is especial right of the senior, and Freshie shouldn't copy." [46]

As well as disgracing fellow students to encourage proper manly behavior, writers for the Courant boasted of the masculinity of their fellow classmates. For example, an 1879 issue of the magazine made known to the entire campus that a competition had been

[46] Courant, 6, 74.

announced: “a challenge for a game of Base Ball has been received from the Georgetown Club. A nine will probably be organized as ‘our boys’ never refuse a challenge.” This statement asserted the masculinity of Centre students, but, when stated in those terms, how could these students back down from the match? The challenge was a test of the boys’ manhood. If they backed down from the baseball rivalry, it would be perceived as unmanly behavior. A real man would not be afraid to prove his athletic prowess. A baseball game presented young men with an opportunity to display physical ability, as well as showing that they did not fear a challenge.[47]

In a later issue of the Courant, a more direct dare was made regarding a baseball game: “the Freshmen left college with disappoint and anger in their hearts, because the Sophomores did not play that game of base ball they had agreed on. The Freshies declared the Sophs. were afraid of them, because they had thrashed the Juniors so soundly. The Sophs must rise and explain, or endure the suspicion of being afraid to play.” Again, the account of the baseball competition between Centre freshmen and sophomores printed in the Courant reflected prevalent notions of manhood. Win or lose, the sophomores must not be perceived as afraid to attempt the game. Losing a baseball game to the freshmen was potentially embarrassing for the sophomores, but worse was the suspicion that they were not even men enough to accept the challenge. [48]

The dominant masculine culture of this time period permitted and encouraged strong bonds among males, especially college-age males who had not yet formed a family. Brotherly affection and near romantic attachments between young men were, as

[47] Ibid., 22.
[48] Ibid.

noted, commonplace; yet a little competition and rivalry among young men was necessary. Eventually these young men would have to leave college and the transitional period of their lives; they would become independent, self-sufficient men and leave behind the boyish attachments made in college. Brotherly love and affection among young men was necessary for their transitional period, but competition and rivalry prepared them for the world of manhood they would soon enter.

In the Courant, proper behavior was encouraged and misbehavior was highlighted to demonstrate the editors' disapproval of such actions. On, March 20, 1879, the Courant printed a story of misadventure taken from the memorandum book of a sophomore. In this account, the student told about a great deal of mischief being perpetrated on Centre's campus. First, the sophomore was studying a bit of Demosthenes before Chapel, in order not to miss anything as "the exercises there are generally *very interesting*." The student had "scarcely settled down to work before [he] was struck in the face by an apple core from some unknown hand; at the same time (which by the way, was during a most touching petition in prayer,) some Senior *accidentally* let several marbles fall on the floor, and they, according to custom, gradually, with a little assistance, wended their way to the other side, in their course considerably breaking into the *religious* silence of the hour." According to the anonymous sophomore, the next hour passed without incident; class "dragged along unusually slow, nothing happening to break the monotony, except when one poor fellow sat down on a pin and immediately arose again." This brought

"many *witty* remarks from the professor," who "feigned great indignation." Things settled down, the bell rang and the students were free once more.[49]

The student's next class brought even more misadventure. The first boy called on to recite could not read; the second fared even worse; and the third was able to read only two lines out of forty. Finally, the fourth boy called on was prepared and the lesson went forward, but an amusing incident happened in the middle of the hour. The day was rainy and many boys had worn rubber boots. A student, seeing the boots lying in the hallway, threw one or more through the door of the Latin professor's room, creating a little excitement. The scheme succeeded beyond the prankster's expectation, causing quite a ruckus. The professor was annoyed, but the trouble-maker fled before he could be disciplined. This episode was not the exception; similar incidents took place as the hour wore on. Finally, the class ended and the student and his classmates were dismissed.[50]

This narrative, signed merely "'81," was immediately followed by a note from the editors of the Courant, saying: "In justice to the college, we must say that '81 is either using his imagination pretty freely, or else is laboring under some hallucination by which his ideas of time are so 'befuddled' that he crowds all the disorder of a month into three hours and a-half. 'Otherwise' we fear his statements are true."[51]

This narrative is important for two reasons—first, because it details the type of pranks that took place at Centre during this time period. Even if the story is not wholly true, it was likely based on pranks that had actually transpired, or at least pranks the

[49] Ibid., 6.
[50] Ibid., 7.
[51] Ibid.

author wished to carry out. Second, the story is important because of the way it was treated by the editors. It was seen as an amusing story, more likely a work of fiction or a highly sensationalized version of the truth. The editors were quick to point out that ’81’s narrative was not a correct reflection of the College and its students. They did not pretend that such pranks were out of the realm of possibility, but did make certain to note that pranks such as these were not commonplace and certainly did not occur with the frequency that ’81’s story implied. As indicated by the editors of the Courant, Centre students felt strongly about defending the reputation of their college. They wanted readers to understand that the mischief in ’81’s story was not the normal state of affairs at the institution. Centre students were proud to attend an institution full of God-fearing, proper gentlemen, and felt that it was important that outsiders regard it as such.

While this particular account was largely exaggerated, misadventure and pranks did happen at Centre. An incident on Halloween of 1880 is among the most infamous in the history of the college. The Courant reported it reluctantly and disapprovingly.

The Y.M.C.A. state convention was in session at Centre during this time and was receiving a good deal of attention. The pranksters covered a large sign over the door of the stairway leading to the Y.M.C.A reading room with a large white cotton sheet and on it painted the word SALOON in letters a foot high. On the left post of the door they nailed three planks which read,

OFFICIAL!

Y. M. C. A. WILL MEET AT THE L. B. &

L. H. (Lager Beer and Lunch House.)

FACULTY ROOM AND FARO BANK

UP STAIRS[52]

Not yet done with their prank, the pranksters placed five pasteboard cards bearing the inscription: "Y.M.C.A. Reading Room—Free to All—Up Stairs." The space on the reverse side of the cards read—"WHISKY and LAGER BEER" or "FARO BANK, SKINNER & WARREN'S FARO BANK—SKINNER, BANKER, WARREN, DEALER."[53]

The pranksters continued their prank at the Second Presbyterian Church. Here they ornamented the door in the manner of an opera house. At the top of the door was a bill reading "GRAND OPERA HOUSE." Under this the door was covered with paper which read: "UNPARALLELED ATTRACTIONS! NEW SCENERY! NEW ARTISTS! NEW PLAYS!" The playbill also included the name of professors and preachers, making them stars of their mock opera.[54]

The Courant's account of the prank begins by condemning the students' actions:

> It becomes our painful duty in this number (7) of The Courant, to chronicle the most infamous trick that has ever agitated college life during the short period of its existence; and to pollute its pages with the record of a transaction stained in darkest dye.

[52] Ibid, 88-89.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

> On Hallowe'en some wretches about town or college, infused with the spirit of diabolism which that occasion is wont to inspire, and determining to have some fun at others' expense, put together their ponderous intellects with the following grand results, --consummated early on the moonlit morn of November 1st.[55]

Rather than reporting the prank to entertain the campus or to extol the pranksters and their creativity, the Courant editors reported the incident out of their sense of duty to report the news and their tone was critical: they saw the practical joke as juvenile and disrespectful. Fellow students were clearly ashamed at the pranksters' actions, rather than amused. Minor misconduct was tolerated and engaged in by the entire student body, but this prank was distasteful; it disrespected the school itself, and more importantly the church. By ridiculing such a sacred place, the jokesters took their joke too far.

While minor misconduct by students was overlooked—and even expected—by parents and the administration, even this departure from the rules came with its own set of boundaries. Within the youth culture, college students still exercised restraint and respect. Taking things too far would spur rebuke from adults and peers alike. Young men rebelled and attempted to assert their independence, but above all they wished to be respected by the adults in their lives (as well as their peers).

During his development from boy to man, a youth strove for the approval of his family and was also dependent on them. The transition period of college was important for him because he began separating himself from his family and moving toward

[55] Ibid.

independence, becoming his own man who made his own decisions. Forming strong bonds with other young men was a necessary step in breaking from the influence of his family—particularly his father. Young men could not progress and become independent without severing that attachment. While college was a time of strict supervision for students, this time away from home was vital to young men's progress in life. Students and parents were both aware of the importance of this separation.

Homesickness and maintaining an overly close attachment to one's family were not acceptable manly behavior. Young men could not properly develop their own lives in the shadow of their fathers. The Courant made an example out of a young man who was too homesick to remain at Centre, remarking in the "Classroom and Campus" section of an 1880 issue: "we are sorry Woods 'didn't like the boys' and had to leave us. The first week away from home is rather trying." The entry served a double purpose: it informed students that Woods was no longer attending Centre, and also poked fun at the unfortunate Woods. The entry implied that severe homesickness—especially that resulting in leaving college for home—was unmanly. While college was a time of transition for young men, during which they retained close ties to their families, it was also a time when they were supposed to begin to sever these attachments; they were to form new attachments to their peers, relying on one another while they learned and prepared for manhood. Relying on one's family for advice and monetary support was acceptable; however, an attachment so strong that a young man could not remain away from his family long enough to participate in the collegiate youth culture was not. [56]

[56] Ibid., 57.

While most Centre students valued male friendships and were either anxious or uninterested in pursuing the opposite sex, male-female relations were a subject of great interest among these young men. The Courant repeatedly commented on "moonstruck couples" and teased students about crushes and sweethearts. For example, one week the editor reprinted a poem written by a young man to his sweetheart, asking: "What senior dropped this on the campus last week?":

Whose darling, rosy lips were pressed
To mine last night? Whose soft, warm hand
Lay in my brown one! who confessed
A love that needed no demand?
And who, in my proud arms caressed,
A bright and happy future planned
Whose alchemy turned all alloys
Into the gold of purest joys?[57]

One young man was distinguished for his reputation as a "ladies' man." The writer poked fun at the young gentleman, saying, "Why was that Senior's arm almost paralyzed, do you ask? Oh, well, you know he always was a ladies' man, and is now suffering the effects of using his strong right arm so constantly to support the dear creatures. Pity him, ladies. He is a martyr to your cause." It was normal, and expected, for young men to have contact with the opposite sex; perhaps this young man became too preoccupied with the "fair sex," warranting ridicule. Such fixation on women was not

[57] Ibid., 9.

masculine. In an environment that valued male friendships and affection and did not consider females equal to men, wasting so much time on female pursuits was inappropriate. Not even the editor of the Courant himself was exempt from such mockery. One edition included the note: "If you notice anything wrong about this number of the Courant, just remember that a certain Louisville maiden has completely captivated our chief editor."[58]

As well as teasing fellow students about relations between the sexes, the magazine jumped on any opportunity to comment on improper behavior when it presented itself. Proper treatment of the opposite sex was an important tenet of masculine behavior. Even though male-female interactions were limited, these young men were determined to approach these interactions correctly. Centre students were quick to point out when their peers did not behave properly. For example, the Courant reported that "several boys who were flirting with a young lady last week, felt rather cheap when they heard of her marriage to-day." The writer made it clear that this was improper behavior, but also was careful to mention that the boys involved felt cheap, implying they realized their behavior was not acceptable. [59]

Young men at Centre consistently showed their interest in young ladies with respect and reserve. Occasionally they got creative with their approach but remained courteous nonetheless. The Courant reported: "'Hello, girls,' is a sign hung out the window of some of the boys' rooms who are evidently weary of pulling off their hats to the many ladies passing that way." These young men wanted to maintain the appearance

[58] Ibid., 42, 57.
[59] Ibid., 133.

of proper behavior. They tipped their hats to young ladies passing by not because they felt strongly that it was the right thing to do but rather because society expected young men to acknowledge young ladies in a certain way. These young men found a way to appear respectful without putting forth a great deal of effort. In much the same way that classical education was simply a part of a gentleman's training, respect for ladies was also a requirement of nineteenth-century masculinity. [60]

So much attention was placed on proper behavior towards the opposite sex that an article about chivalry appeared in the Courant debating its merits. First, the article discussed the chivalry of old, saying: "One of the fundamental principles of chivalry was reverence and love of women, and he who had not some exclusive mistress of his heart was considered of but little force. . . . [Ladies'] decisions were irrevocable, and woe to him who refused to accept it—he was unworthy of knighthood. This spirit, in some degree, continues to the present day, and to it woman owes her high social position among us."[61]

The article continued by musing about what chivalry meant in the present day. "Though no one would wish to see the era of chivalry return, he cannot help seeing the vast amount of good which it exerted in that day; it played a part that nothing but itself could in such a rough and barbarous age; was sanctioned by the church as a beneficial agent, and accomplished much good that it would otherwise have been impossible to effect."[62]

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[60] Ibid., 139.
[61] Ibid., 30.
[62] Ibid.

In the late nineteenth century, women were still regarded a delicate creatures who should be treated with respect. While Centre students seemed to feel that the chivalry of long ago was a bit overstated, they recognized its value and clung to some of its tenets. Part of being a man was treating ladies with proper respect. At this time, particularly in the South, there were unambiguous rules as to how gentlemen were to behave towards ladies. Centre students showed interest in young women, as attested by the many references to this interest in the Courant. How to behave toward them was a significant issue for these young men.

While they were not terribly concerned about cultivating friendships or romantic relationships with young women, young men were very concerned about how they were viewed by young ladies. The Courant reported that "a junior growing eloquent about his girl, remarked that 'the case was mutual on both sides.'" Another issue reported on a young lady's thoughts about Centre's new class. "'What a smart class this is,' remarked a young lady at the Class-day exercises." The same issue commented, "We have seldom seen so many beautiful young ladies in town as there were last week. Boys feast on ambrosia." While young men kept young ladies at arms length, they were still very interested in the opposite sex.[63]

Young men were somewhat intimidated by young ladies; they were much more comfortable interacting with other young men. A later edition of the magazine described the embarrassment of a young man due to his interaction with young ladies. "The cheekiest man in college was at last repulsed the other day. He visited Bell Seminary, or

[63] Ibid., 57, 42

started there, but the crowd of girls, hanging out in the sun on the gate and fence, caused him to remember another engagement and to dart up a neighboring alley." Even such a bold young man was stopped in his tracks by a group of young ladies. Rather than risk potential embarrassment by socializing with young women, this particular young man chose to avoid the situation. [64]

Regardless of the motivation behind it, proper behavior was important to Centre students. If a student did behave in a less than appropriate manner toward a young lady, his fellow classmates were usually quick to call attention to his tactlessness. For example, one issue of the Courant printed the following note: "It was disgraceful the way the boys behaved the night of the debate. It would be expected they could show a little courtesy to the ladies anyhow." Respect for ladies was a part of being a man, considered as necessary as education or appearance.[65]

Conclusion

Centre students were not perceived or treated as men. Correspondingly, Centre students did not view themselves as men. College was regarded as a transitional time during which a little boyish mischief was tolerated. However, during this time boys were educated in moral, religious, and scholastic knowledge. Parents, via direct correspondence and school officials, kept a close watch over their sons. In turn, school officials felt responsible for students' moral instruction and well-being. Young Southern men in college were being groomed for a life of responsibility and success.

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[64] Ibid., 74.
[65] Ibid., 88.

Throughout college young men formed intimate friendships with other young men and reveled in their lack of responsibility. They were not held to the same standards as adult men, but they were closely scrutinized by adults to make certain they were developing properly. Student culture paralleled that of the adults in their lives. Students also monitored the behavior of their peers, showing disapproval when one among them did not exhibit appropriate manly behavior. Hierarchies developed within the student body, with older students exemplifying respectable behavior and their younger counterparts looking to them for guidance. Student organizations and student publications publicly enforced ideals of proper behavior and offered a vehicle through which errant students could be kept in check. This student culture reinforced popular adult notions about how students should behave.

My findings contradict those of some scholars of higher education who have concluded that college students in the nineteenth century created a counter-culture in which they misbehaved, discarded adult notions of masculinity, and formed their own distinct ideals. These students lacked respect for authority; they fought to assert their independence from the adults in their lives. Centre students also longed for independence, but seemed to reconcile themselves to the awkward position they occupied in life—college students were no longer children, but not yet adults. These students respected the adults in their lives and adopted adult values as their own.

I cannot say whether or not my findings are peculiar to Centre College in this time period, or if trends at Centre mirrored those at other colleges of similar size during these years. I believe the behavior of Centre students can be attributed to the regional culture of

the South. Honor, chivalry, and respect for elders were valued tenets of society in this region; middle- and upper-class Southerners prided themselves on proper behavior. Also, the strong religious influence of Centre cannot be ignored. The principles of deference and respect are important tenets of Protestantism. The founders and administration of Centre College were ardently Presbyterian and taught their charges to adhere to the religion's principles. My findings suggest avenues for further research; a similar examination of other Southern schools in the nineteenth century could confirm whether the experience of Centre students was unique or representative.

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Vita

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